

I Connect Therefore I Am

From Manila to Salem to New York City: My Life As New York Stage Manager



Julia Brunner is a graduate of Schule Schloss Salem. Now she works as a stage manager in New York near Broadway. Picture: Brunner

"Shakespeare is not a realistic writer but he is overwhelmingly real because he reports the hearts of human beings."

Samson Raphaelson in *The Human Nature of Playwriting*

Hi, I am Julia Brunner. I have many identities in my heart. I was born in Berlin in 1994 and I grew up in the Philippine capital Manila – a big city. There I went to International Schools until 9th grade. For quite some time I thought of myself as a 'Philippina'. My German father made me connect to life in the provinces, in the country side. I went skiing in Germany, and trekked the Himalayas. Consequently, the impact climate change has on our natural environment is of great concern to me. Technically, I am still living in a seaside resort outside Manila, as my European parents have part-time settled there.

The latter experience helped me connect with my life in the country side in Salem for my 10th grade, and led me to continue my education for the IB exam in 2012. As *Neu-Salemer* I suddenly lived another identity in a castle among apple orchards and vineyards. 'Salemers' know how to live through different identities. Since middle school, I began to see theatre as my way to connect to my audience in my multiple identities. For me this is a way of being and staying alive – a constant struggle among different identities. Theatre allows me to show the audience they are not the only fools on the planet struggling with the god-awful business of being alive.

Before I completed my IB exams, I was admitted to Barnard College, a small 'village campus' in the middle of the big Columbia University campus, central to New York City, or 'the Big Apple'. This suited me well, and I first started off majoring in environment



A scene of the play *A Piece of my Heart* by Shirley Lauro.



Another theatre scene of Julia Brunner's work in New York.

science and law. Then my multiple identities caught up with me, and made me major in theatre. I wrote my first play *Codswallop and Other Nonsense Words*. I received my degree from Barnard College this year in the spring.

Now I am stage manager for a small theatre in Manhattan – just around the corner from Broadway – on Bond Street. I am managing a new production of *A Piece of my Heart* by Shirley Lauro, a play based on true stories of women who served in Vietnam. As a stage manager, I generate a prompt book for the rehearsal and performance process, including blocking, and am responsible for performer contracts and Actors' Equity paperwork.

Julia Brunner, IB 2012

Personal Details

Julia Brunner, 23 years old, studied at Barnard College of Columbia University, New York, USA, and received the Bachelor of Arts in 2017. Julia is now stage manager in New York theaters, ensuring all technical aspects occurring on stage and in the wings are taken care of. She also volunteers for the League of Professional Theater Women. Julia loves walking dogs.